The State-wise data is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

[English]

Interest on GPF

5719. PROF. OM PAL SINGH 'NIDAR' : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of prevailing rate of interest on deposits in the foreign banks/companies/nationalised banks for a minimum period of one year or more ;

(b) whether the interest rate on General Provident Fund (GPFs) is much less in comparison to foreign banks and other organisations;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to increase the rate of interest on GPF also ;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Under the interest rate structure presently prescribed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI), banks are free to fix their own deposit rate on domestic term deposits of over one year. According to information available with RBI, as reported by banks, the interest rates on domestic term deposits of above one year offered by major nationalised banks and foreign banks is as given below :

Duration	Rate of interest (per cent per annum)
(i) *Nationalised Banks*	
Above one year and upto two years	11.00
Above two years and upto three years	12.00
Above three years	13.00
(ii) *Foreign Banks*	
Above one year and upto two years	12.0 to 14.0
Over two years	12.5 to 15.0

RBI has further reported that Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) are allowed to pay interest at a rate not exceeding 15.0 per cent per annum on the deposits for the period of one year and above and upto five years. However, registered NBFCs which comply with the prudential norms, minimum investment grade credit rating and other regulations have been, *inter-alia*, permitted to fix interest rates as determined by them on the deposits of one year and upto five years after they obtain a certificate from the FBI regarding compliance with the aforesaid requirements.

(b) to (g). The interest being paid on GPF is 12 per cent. The interest in totally exempted from income tax without any ceiling and the subscriptions also qualify for tax rebate. There is no proposal under consideration at present to increase the interest rate on GPF.

[Translation]

Import and Export of Tea and Coffee

5720. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :
SHRIMATI BHAVNA BEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity fo tea and coffee that has been imported/exported during each of the last three years;

(b) the target fixed for the export fo these commodities during the current year; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to achieve the target fixed for the export of these commodities ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Details of export/import of coffee and tea in the last three years are as follows :

(Qty. in tonne)(Value Rs. crore)

Year	Qty.	Value
Export of coffee		
1993-94	136690	586.99
1994-95	137395	1096.33
1995-96	167956	1492.60
Import of Coffee		

Import of roasted/decaffeinated coffee was allowed only from 1.4.95.

(Qty. in Mn. Kg.) (Value Rs. Crore)

Year	Qty.	Value
Export of tea		
1993-94	154.55	1062.04
1994-95	152.16	989.41
1995-96	163.65	1191.19
Import of Tea		
1993-94	0.87	3.99
1994-95	0.20	1.10
1995-96	0.46	2.41

(b) The targets for export of tea and coffee for the year 1996-97 is are follows :

Tea	180 Million Kg.
Coffee	1,50,000 tonne.

(c) Steps taken by Coffee Board to boost exports include:

(i) regular participation in important coffee fairs abroad;

(ii) media publicity campaign to popularise Indian coffee besides production of a T.V. film on Indian coffee.

(iii) regular market survey and deputation of business negotiation/delegation to foreign markets; and

(iv) inviting foreign market teams to the country to popularise Indian coffee.

Steps taken by Tea Board to boost exports through promotional campaigns by the Board's office consist of (i) participation in trade fairs/exhibitions; (ii) media campaign to increase consumer awareness of unique characteristics of Indian tea; (iii) media campaign to popularise Indian tea through the Tea Board marketing symbol; and (iv) support to various foreign brand containing Indian tea. Tea Board has also undertaken 'Darjeeling' 'Assam' Logo campaign in U.K. along with brand promotion schemes abroad to popularise classic Indian teas.

[English]

Renovation of Cycle Corporation

5721. SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to formulate any plan for modernisation/renovation of the Cycle Corporation of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c). In its last hearing, BIFR had formed a *primafacie* opinion that Cycle Corporation of India Limited (CCIL) was not viable on long term basis. Further proceedings of BIFR have been stayed by the Calcutta High Court and the matter is *sub-judice.*

Export of Cement

5722. SHRI CHHATAR SINGH DARBAR : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the target set for the export of cement during the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether the export of cement during the above plan is as per the targets till now;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c). While no specific target for export of cement during the Eighth Plan has been fixed, export of cement/clinker has been increasing during the last few years, except in 1995-96 when there was a decline mainly due to higher demand in the domestic market. The year-wise export of cement/clinker is as under :

Year	Export (Million Tonnes)
1992-93	1.18
1993-94	2.85
1994-95	3.17
1995-96	2.38

(d) and (e). Do not arise.

[Translation]

Evasion of Excise Duty

5723. SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :
SHRI RAMSAGAR :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Central excise revenue is being evaded by the manufacturers with impunity in large number of cases and the central excise authorities do not seem to be serious about that;

(b) if so, the number of assessment of the central excise revenue evasion during 1995 been made and if so, how much does it work out; and

(c) the steps taken or propose to be taken by the Government to strengthen the central excise department to check such evasion by undertaking more number of visits to the manufacturers ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). It is not true that Central Excise authorities are not serious in detecting evasion of central excise duty by manufacturers. 5566 cases involving central excise duty of the order of Rs. 1276.16 crores have been booked by the Central Excise Department during the year 1995.

The Central Excise Department has stepped up preventive activities to curb evasion of central excise duty. As a result, gathering of intelligence, surprise checks of production and clearance, and transit checks have been intensified with a view to preventing clandestine manufacture and removal of excisable goods.